

I V A R.

TRAGEDY.

Ως ἴφαιρος κλαίουσ' ————— HOMER.

Sic fatur lacrymans ————— VIRGIL.

EXETER:

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EXETER.

M,DCC,LXXXV.

Price ONE SHILLING and SIX-PENCE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

H E N G I S T.

ALSWOLD *and* OFFA, *Princes and Sons of* HENGIST.

H A N D E L.

IVAR, *Favourite of* HENGIST.

MESSENGERS, OFFICERS, &c.

W O M E N.

MATILDA, *Daughter of* HENGIST.

LADIES, *Attendants of* MATILDA.

SCENE. Near the PALACE.



E R A T A.

Page 2, line 13, for *I*, read *I'll*.—P. 3, l. 17, for *the*, r. *thy*.—
P. 5, l. 13, for *thou*, r. *you*.—P. 6, l. 19, for *reigns*, r. *reign*.—
P. 7, l. 6, for *in*, r. *within*.—Ibid. l. 26, for *to*, r. *the*.—P. 8, l. 14,
for *eyes*, r. *eye*.—P. 9, l. 18, Item.—P. 10, l. 3, for *should*, r. *shall*.—
Ibid. l. 16, for *grews*, r. *grew*.—Ibid. l. 21, after *these*, add *the*.—
P. 12, l. 9, after *with*, add *all*.—P. 13, l. 6, for *it is*, r. *is it*.—
Ibid. l. 13, after *as*, add *now*.—P. 14, l. 5, for *look*, r. *looks*.—
Ibid. l. 12, del. *to*.—P. 15, l. 2, for *leige*, r. *liege*.—Ibid. l. 8,
Item.—P. 21, l. 4, after *is*, add *it*.—Ibid. l. 10, for *he's*, r. *he is*.—
P. 28, l. 1, for *thro' it*, r. *thro't*.—P. 31, l. 24, for *my*, r. *thy*.—
P. 32, l. 8, for *was it*, r. *was't*.—Ibid. l. 14, for *against*, r. *'gainst*.—
P. 39, l. 9, for *would*, r. *will*.—P. 38, l. 9, after *deeper*, add *of*.—
Ibid. l. 21, for *edg'd*, r. *hedg'd*.—P. 47, l. 1, after *who*, add *do*.—
P. 48, l. 15, for *ruin*, r. *ruins*.

I V A R.
T R A G E D Y.

A C T I.

Enter I V A R.

TIS now high time to spread my snares about,
To take the unsuspecting Alfwold in,
Lest opportunity should slip my hold,
And unaccomplish'd leave me my intent.
Already have I fix'd in Offa's breast,
A cold reserve which makes him fall far short
Of that affection he had for his Brother;
And if I've any skill in his mind's bent,
Severe resentment will supply its place,
And make him join with me to take him off.
Alfwold, that speech of thine shall cost thee dear,
Wherein thou call'd'st us favourites of kings,
Vermin that prey in secret on the State,
Soon shalt thou find my swift revenge set loose,
Which shall not turn aside from thy pursuit
Till all thy glory be wrapt up in dust.

B

And

And the more easily I can work on thee,
 As Hengist is grown jealous of thy fame,
 And even thinks the laurels round thy brow
 Have blasted those that once adorn'd his own,
 Remembrance of past time a glass holds up,
 In which I see before my ravish'd sight,
 A Father's aged cheek with envy pale,
 His knees both trembling to support his weight,
 To hear th' heroic deeds that grac'd his Son;
 Tho' 'twere a means to him to reign in safety:
 Allwold the path that leads to ruin's fair!
 Now let me see which way to act is best—
 But Offa comes—O! on his head I place
 The crown that is to round his Brother's head,
 Or else I'll sink for ever in th' attempt!

Enter OFFA.

How is it with my Prince? How is't with Offa?
 Indeed your face seems sicken'd o'er with care,
 If there be skill in me to guess aright.

OFFA.

Why this, a sleepless night hath been with me,
 And still it hangs so heavy on my senses,
 That Offa scarce can say he is himself.

I V A R.

What evil thing disturb'd my Offa's rest?

OFFA.

As soon as sleep had o'er my senses crept,
 Methought the fates all stood before my sight,
 (Inexorable, unalterable, unchang'd)

And

A T R A G E D Y.

And with stern summons bid me to prepare
For death, as 'twas decreed that I should die;
Strait ev'ry terror shot into my soul,
And images of death stood thick around,
I sprung from sleep, and dar'd to sleep no more.

I V A R.

A wise man's thoughts are ne'er to be hurt by dreams:
O my dear Offa! I'd reveal to you,
What nearly you concerns, but cannot now,
Your mind's oppressed by an evil dream!

O F F A.

Why surely Ivar you'll not keep it from me.

I V A R.

Ah! did you know my thoughts you'd find I would not;
But there are times and seasons of address,
When most persuasion wins upon the soul;
At such a time I would address my Offa,
And tell him what he is, what ought to be.

O F F A.

I'll summon all my being to attention,
That not a word may pass the lips in vain.

I V A R.

Think not I'd blame in you a want of greatness,
Such as a noble mind forms in itself,
By magnanimity and gen'rous deeds,
By acts of valour, and a noble daring,
That ever scorns to shrink from any danger,
That bars its passage in the way to glory:

For where is Offa's equal in all these?
 Come, be yourself, if you sincerely love me,
 And from your memory shake off your dream,
 Which so obscures by rising in your mind,
 The lustre of a brow that well will grace
 The wearing of a crown, and do it honour.

O F F A.

Ivar, your love for me makes you forget,
 That I was never born to wear a crown.

I V A R.

And will you then, at humble distance stand,
 Doing mean reverence at your Brother's throne?

O F F A.

I don't think Alfwold would require it from me.

I V A R.

Then you don't see futurity aright;
 For this he will require admits no doubt;
 And can you stand submissive to your Brother?
 To think of this, tho' only in a dream,
 Would make me weep, so much it would affect me:
 O Offa, Offa, where's your boasted line,
 Those mighty heroes like the gods in fight!
 Since you can bear with such indignity
 To bend in reverence at your Brother's throne!

O F F A.

Ivar, if thou love me, think more nobly;
 Think not so meanly, I can bear myself;
 'Tis true, my Brother's in his carriage noble,

Such

Such as from each beholder draws respect;
 Besides each act of valour is his own;
 E'en this the rankest malice can't deny.
 Such as he is, he would deserve a crown;
 Could he not look on Hengist as his Sire;
 But more respect he'll never have from me,
 Than what a Brother to a Brother owes:
 To bend to him 's abhorrent to my nature;
 Rather than that, should he require it from me,
 (Altho' I disregard the name of King)
 I'd strike the crown from off his kingly head,
 And even snatch the sceptre from his hand.

I V A R.

It is his valour (that thou praise so much)
 Join'd to his noble carriage that afflicts me;
 Which so draws after him the hearts of men,
 That scarce an eye is cast on princely Offa.
 He'th other virtues too you have unnotic'd;
 But whether innate in him or assum'd,
 I shall not make the subject of enquiry:
 But likeliest as a cloke he puts them on
 To draw men's good opinion to himself:
 Sometimes 'tis deep policy to seem virtuous,
 And more than human to a common eye
 To gather strength before the time be ripe
 To bring forth dark-laid schemes to execution,
 Then off the mask goes, and the man appears.

Thus Alfwold fortifies himself against you,
 Lest you should not with patience bear his rein.
 You say, and sure it speaks your nature generous
 "Such as he is he would deserve a crown
 "Could he not look on Hengist as his Sire."

It may be so, but Offa, what don't you,
Don't you as well as he deserve to reign?
Does not the mark of royalty become you
As well as Alfwold! O it makes me mad
To form a thought so injurious of my Prince!
But you will say desert's not always crown'd
As fortune blindly lifts the crown to him
Whom chance was willing first should see the light:
This is the law that makes your Brother King,
But sure this law could ne'er confine the brave
Who look with utmost indignation on it,
And when occasion offers shake it off:
This I could instance to you from example;
Did not I know that Offa feels within
This noble impulse of all daring minds,
Nor wants he an example to increase it.
The splendor of a crown you might regard not,
Were not things more essential linked to it;
For if Prince Alfwold reigns, 'tis farewell Offa,
Farewell at once all dignity to Offa!
And would you suffer this? I trust you would not:
Then now's the time to act, the present time
That's swiftly going never to return!
For in imagination but conceive
Your Brother seated on your Father's throne,
Would he not give command to this effect?
"Offa, draw near, it is our will and pleasure,
"That you in rev'rence stand before our throne,
"And swear allegiance to your King and Lord."
Should you shrink back, around him stand his guards,
Strait to enforce submission at his nod,
And would you then strive with your Brother's greatness,
And

A T R A G E D Y.

And snatch the sceptre from his lifted hand!
 Yes, so you might too, with a whirlwind strive
 To stay its fury rushing on the deep.

O F F A.

Ivar, you've turn'd my eyes upon myself:
 To guard against all evils such as these,
 I would, if means did lie in my pow'r,
 Have equal share in ruling with my Brother;
 Because that Alswold breath'd this vital air
 Before that I was born, I see no cause
 That he should ever rear his front 'bove mine;
 Nay, by that god whose thunder shakes the world,
 Both he and I will sink to endless night
 Ere that shall be.

I V A R.

I like this noble energy of mind,
 It speaks a spirit fit to awe the world;
 But do you think that Alswold e'er will yield
 To share the kingdom with his brother Offa?
 I tell you no, as well two suns might run
 Thro' heav'n their course, as you with Alswold reign.
 Come near my noble Lord, give me your hand,
 Confide in me and fill your Father's throne
 Without a rival. What, shall you his equal,
 Shall you all humble stand and do him rev'rence?
 It shall not be, for Ivar is your friend—
 I have by me an impress of his seal,
 To which with nicest art I must take off,
 And on it weave a tale of deadly note
 To work you good. Come you along with me,
 And fully I'll disclose what I intend.

B 4

O F F A.

S

I

V

A

R.

O F F A.

O leave me but a minute, I'll be with you.

Exit Ivar.

In what vast difficulty am I involv'd,
To thrive by fraud which from my soul I scorn;
But what does greatly aggravate the fraud,
Prince Alswold is my elder Brother too!
Ah, let me not think of that!
It makes my blood run cold—
But if I turn aside from this affair,
Then I must kneel and wear my Brother's chains,
Yes, tamely kneel to him and call him Lord;
Confusion on the thought—Ivar, lead on!
I'll follow thee if it be to death and hell.
Ah, here he comes!
His eyes like lightning strikes my very soul—
I must away—

Exit.

Enter A L S W O L D.

Of what offence just heav'n have I been guilty,
That Offa flies his Brother Alswold's presence?
If I in ignorance have done him wrong,
A gen'rous nature surely should forgive it:
Wrong'd him, it cannot be, I can't have wrong'd him—
I've mark'd this strangeness rising in his blood.
Doubtless he looks with envy on my birth-right,
And wants a crown to glitter round his head;
But that will never be while Alswold lives:
Altho' I am not charm'd with thoughts of reigning,
Nor with the vain parade that waits on Kings;
But with heroic worth, and manly valour,

That

A T R A G E D Y,

That can secure an empire from invasion,
And pluck a crown from off a tyrant's head;
But if just heav'n think fit without my care,
That I shall rule the kingdom that I'm born to,
As soon I'd turn my army back in fight,
And tremble midst of danger, as not keep
These honours, which by right of birth are mine,
Fix'd as that star which stands unmov'd in heav'n,
Or as the heav'ns that never pass away.

Enter M A T I L D A.

Matilda, you'll not fly me,
You will not fly me like your Brother Offa;
I've always been to you a gen'rous Brother.

M A T I L D A.

What does my Brother Offa fly your presence?
Fly Alswold's presence, what should be the cause?

A L S W O L D.

I cannot tell, no matter what's the cause—
Ah! whence is this!
Whence is it that you seem so much distress'd?
Tears start in your eyes!—Ah, why these tears!
Who's he hath dar'd to wrong thee! tell me strait;
By heav'n, whoe'er hath dar'd to wrong Matilda,
Shall never more taste rest before this sword
Shall make him feel our justice.

M A T I L D A.

Ah, my gen'rous Brother, I am not wrong'd,
Where's he would wrong Matilda?
Who's he would wrong the Sister of great Alswold?
Perhaps you'll say I have no cause of grief,

And

And like it to a dream that nothing means;
 Yet I can't choose but weep,
 To think that shortly I should lose a Brother,
 And who can tell but Alswold may be he!

A L S W O L D.

What is it makes you think so?

M A T I L D A.

Last night (I think indeed 'twas rather late,)
 Near three hours after that the golden sun
 Had took his leave of day, and dark'ning East
 Had given notice of the coming night:
 Ah, recollection makes me shed a tear!
 You will excuse it Brother.

A L S W O L D.

I do, go on.

M A T I L D A.

While in my private room I was amusing,
 Ev'ry thing around me 'gan look melancholy,
 As if deep sorrow had took hold on 't—
 The windows shook—the lights grew instant dark,
 And a thick gloom had quite possess'd the house:
 When strait a voice more deadly than the grave,
 More sad than bell that tolls a parted friend,
 Did seem to come from out the op'ning earth,
 And these words twice utter'd to my ear.

“ Princess, you have two Brothers,
 “ But ere to-morrow's sun shall run his course,
 “ Mournful shall one of them be stretch'd in death;
 “ Pale, cold, and bloody—more I could unfold,
 “ But fate forbids——unhappy Princess.”

ALSWOLD.

A L S W O L D.

Indeed 'tis very strange,
 I know not what to think on't;
 But are you sure it was not mere illusion,
 Stirr'd up within you by your troubl'd fancy,
 That hath deluded thus your eyes and ears,
 With counterfeit resemblance and false sound.
 How oft' is by imagination form'd,
 Things which in nature never had a being
 That strike the breast with worse than Gorgon horror,
 And hurry on and fright the soul to madness.

M A T I L D A.

I was not deluded Alswold, I was not;
 'Twas not illusion rais'd by troubl'd fancy;
 My mind was quite unruff'd and at ease:
 If that be Alswold who now stands before me,
 'Twas no illusion.

Ah Alswold, fancy paints thee to my eye,
 All cold and deadly pale stretch'd out in death
 And bloody too!—Ay me, how shall I weep
 When thou art dead!—Unhappy Princess!

A L S W O L D.

I pray thee peace,
 And cease to weep before it be fulfill'd;
 When Fate has number'd Alswold 'mong the dead;
 There'll then be time enough to weep for him.
 But I would have Matilda think with me,
 That death is farther from me than she thinks,
 That this day will not see Prince Alswold die.
 But what matters it——
 No matter when death comes, since come it must;

Princess

Princes and peasants, young and old,
The base and honourable all alike—
Here act their parts then sink into the grave,
And act no more! to memory forgot;
Except a few whom history shall snatch
From so severe a ruin of the grave.
I'd rather die could I command my fate,
Like my great ancestors who chanc'd to fall
With their honours fresh around their head,
Than live to see mine wither on my brow.

Exeunt,

End of the FIRST ACT,

ACT

A C T II.

Enter I V A R.

Now let me cloke myself in deep disguise,
 And dress out falsehood in the garb of truth,
 That I may cheat the senses of the King,
 And set his mind at work thro' fear and rage,
 To drive him on against an innocent Son—
 But it is comely to use deceit?
 Does it not shame the dignity of nature?
 Let that alone, I shan't examine 't now.
 My mind is not in tune for such enquiries:
 It shall suffice that I have undertook
 To place a crown upon Prince Offa's head;
 But mine's a two-fold cause that sets me on
 To act as I do—my love to Offa,
 And the strong hate I bear his Brother Alswold,
 That hate alone should bind me to my purpose,
 Close as the ties that hold my soul and body,
 Did not the love of Offa too persuade me—
 Here Hengist comes—now fraud lend me thy art
 To work him to a fever of the blood,
 And let his Son's death medicine a cure.

Enter H E N G I S T.

H E N G I S T.

Ivar, whence is this, you seem much mov'd?

I V A R.

Just now by chance a picture caught my eye,
 That represents a hated parricide,

Rearing

Rearing his sword against his royal Father ;
 Indeed my Lord 'tis that hath something moved me,
 For I began to think within myself,
 What horrid cruelty could steel that breast,
 Which not a Father's look could touch with pity,
 Nor any ties of nature could persuade,
 Nor conscience, nor remorse, nor even dread,
 Of the all pow'ful and avenging gods,
 To stay his bloody hand from such a deed.

H E N G I S T.

Ivar, it doth not shame humanity
 To hold in such abhorrence such an act :
 But surely I have no need to fear, my Sons
 Train'd up to glorious deeds and form'd to virtue :
 O Offa, can I e'er suspect that thou
 Wilt aught devise against thy Father's head ;
 Suspicion's self from thee e'en turns away.

I V A R.

Offa's a Prince to ev'ry greatness born,
 And so I hope is Alfwold—but I've fears.

H E N G I S T.

What are your fears—I charge thee by my friendship
 That thou wilt speak sincerely to thy sov'reign
 What are your inmost thoughts.

I V A R.

My dearest Lord ;
 If to remembrance you can call the time,
 When 'twas you found your Ivar insincere,
 Then never more dare trust him.

HENGIST.

H E N G I S T.

I never found thee otherwise than faithful.

I V A R.

Yea, my dear leige, and ever will be faithful,
Why did you not from banishment receive me,
Fall'n from the height of all my dignity,
And shall I ever be to you a traitor?

H E N G I S T.

No more——

But to th' affair proceed.

I V A R.

My sov'reign leige

I have my fears, but hope that they are vain,
For is it possible! how can it be!
How can a Son dare image such a thought
To dispossess his Sire! and such a Sire!
It is impossible! it cannot be!

H E N G I S T.

What, to dethrone me Ivar!

I V A R.

This morn my liege, as I stood at the gate,
That fronts your royal palace, there I saw
A croud of people lowly bending down;
Bare were their heads and frequent would they cry,
“ Great Alfwold live for ever, thou alone
“ Art worthy to be our leader and our King;
“ Thou who thro' thickest ranks didst cut thy way,
“ Who wert a match e'en for an host of foes,

“ Who

" Who sav'st thy country from the enemy's hand;

" 'Tis thou deserv'st a crown and shalt be King,

" God save King Alswold, let him live for ever."

H E N G I S T.

What, did they say so!

I V A R.

Yea, my Lord, they did.

H E N G I S T.

He then did court them from their due allegiance,

To me their sov'reign and his royal Father;

O ye heav'nly pow'rs, what cursed dæmon

Could stir up such a thought within his breast,

To snatch the crown from off his Father's head!

I V A R.

Indeed my Lord it is with me a doubt

Whether he did or did not court them to it;

But all things weigh'd I rather think he did;

For as his eye unwelcome met with mine,

'Twas thus he graceful spoke within my hearing.

" I'll always bare my bosom for your safety,

" When danger calls against th' enemy's sword;

" I would with pleasure die to save my country,

" And what is dearer to me, you my friends:

" But my honour'd Father is your Sov'reign,

" Long may he live to bless you with his reign."

Then with majestic air he took his leave:

At which following his steps with loud huzzas

They did uprend the air.

HENGIST,

A TRAGEDY. 17

H E N G I S T.

O my Ivar!
 'Twas only to deceive thee that he spoke thus;
 'Twas there he show'd the all accomplish'd villain,
 Giving a grace to acts of villainy
 To make them look all glorious to the world:
 But it becomes us to secure ourself;
 To sue for means that may guard well our throne
 That it may stand unshaken midst of danger.

I V A R.

Indeed my Lord I should have scarce suspected,
 That he had set his thoughts against your throne;
 Had I not motives stronger to induce me.

H E N G I S T.

And do the gods now hush their dreaded thunder
 And such a villain lives upon the earth!

I V A R.

On my knees I must entreat my sov'reign,
Kneels.
 That he will stand 'twixt me and Allswold's fury:
 O let me call the pow'rs of heav'n to witness,
 That I would choose to die with extreme torture,
 Much rather, than conceal from my dear Lord
 Whatever looks like treason.

H E N G I S T.

Arise, my Ivar rise, for here I swear,
 By the dread majesty of highest heav'n,
 That he shall never hurt that head of thine.

Raises him.

C

I V A R.

I V A R.

Ah, with what grief do I produce a letter,
 Which he by chance, or else so heav'n will'd
 In pity to my sov'reign should lose
 And I should find; for surely righteous heav'n
 For ever has an eye on things like these,
 And when so foul a treachery's on foot,
 By interposing stops her progress short,
 And stays her hand, just at the instant rais'd
 To deal in murder.

H E N G I S T.

What murder say'st thou!

I V A R.

This my Lord will show

Giving him the letter

So foul a purpose aim'd against your person,
 That makes me almost weep to think on't.

Hengist reads it and exclaims

Merciful heav'n, what do my eyes behold!
 He does provide him with a base assassin
 To stab his Father at the hour of midnight.
 And he himself will secretly conduct him!
 Why wilt thou not too guide the bloody dagger
 Unto thy Father's breast thou worst of parricides—
 See how he turns his crime into a virtue
 To ease his country of a cruel tyrant;
 And may the gods pour down on me their vengeance,
 If I don't ease the world of a wretch like thee.

I V A R.

Consider with yourself, it may be forg'd.

HENGIST.

A T R A G E D Y,

29

H E N G I S T.

Forg'd! it cannot be!
It is impossible!
Behold his hand! his seal!

I V A R.

'Tis certainly my Lord Prince Alswold's seal—
And might I give my judgment—'tis his hand.
How mournful 'tis my Lord to think he'd given
The fairest outside nature could bestow,
Attemper'd with an air of such divinity,
That gain'd with reverence on each beholder,
And held their minds in ravishment fast chain'd,
To be the cov'ring of so foul a purpose
Against so good so gen'rous a parent!
I cannot think of this and keep from tears.

H E N G I S T.

O Ivar, Ivar, were it not for thee,
This night, this very night,
At the dead midnight hour,
Thy King with treachery would have been murder'd—
While the sweet hour of sleep had rest upon me,
Should I have left this pleasing upper air,
And sunk down to the regions of the dead,
And left my kingdom to a base assassin
The worst of all assassins a murderer of his Father.

I V A R.

I am quite happy to have serv'd my sov'reign,
Altho' my service be repaid with death—
My Lord, the Princess hitherward is coming—
I beg your kind permission to withdraw.

Exit.

HENGIST.

Oh villain! villain! is it thus thou would'st
 Is it thus thou would'st take off thy Father!
 O may for this the foul fiends watch thy slumbers,
 And bring all hell in vision to thy view—
 But I'll have justice on thee, thou shalt die
 To-morrow's sun lights up thy last of days.

Enter MATILDA.

Why is my royal Father so disturb'd!
 Amazement mix'd with fury frights your eye—
 O let your daughter cheer your troubl'd mind;
 O can she give you ease?

HENGIST.

My dear Matilda;
 O thou the image of my lost Elfrida,
 Her looks were such as thine—thou hast a Brother—

MATILDA.

Have I a Brother dead? ye heav'nly pow'rs—
 Speak, speak, my royal Father who is dead!

HENGIST.

O no he is not dead—much worse than dead—
 My tongue denies the utterance of words
 That would make Nature shudder—
 It makes me wild to think on't;
 Prince Alfwold hath devis'd against my life.

MATILDA.

Alfwold devis'd against my Father's life!

HENGIST.

A T R A G E D Y.

21

H E N G I S T.

Even this very day, at dead of night,
Would he have led a murderer to my chamber,
To kill me while asleep within my bed.

M A T I L D A.

Merciful heav'n what is that I hear!
What, at the dead of night would Alfwold kill you!
O bloody deed against the ties of nature,
It cannot be;
He never would, or could devise against you;
He ne'er would lift his hand against your head;
He's too good, he could not bear to think it—
Indeed it cannot be.

It is some plot contrived by a villain,
(Who hath took envy at my Brother's greatness)
To stir you up against an innocent Son,
To stain your-hands with blood——
Indeed it is no more——
Ah! will my Father think so?

H E N G I S T.

Ha, is it not! read that.

Gives her the letter.

No, never will I think so;
Soon as to-morrow's sun begin to rise
Strait shall he away to execution:
I'll ease the world of such a barbarous wretch;
He never more shall plot against our life.

M A T I L D A.

O my Father it is forg'd, indeed it is.
What did I hear? methinks I heard you say,

That Alfwold should away to execution
Soon as to-morrow's sun begins to rise!

H E N G I S T.

I did, it is my will, and it shall stand
Unshaken with entreaty.—Hence no more!

M A T I L D A.

O let my tears persuade you—
O let me beg you for your peace of mind,
Never to think of such an horrid purpose—
What guilt what sharp remorse shall shake your breast,
When you shall find that he was innocent
When 'tis too late—Oh on my knees I beg—

Kneels.

H E N G I S T.

Matilda, thou art privy to the plot,
Yes, by heav'n thou art, else why entreat
To save the life of one not fit to live,
To save the life of one who'd kill thy Father.
O in appearance what a noble being,
That such a form should be quite lost to virtue!
O you my senses do you not turn wild
To think upon't—Thou art no more my Daughter,
I abandon thee, I cast thee from me.

M A T I L D A.

My Father! O my Father let me beg you—

Exit Hengist.

He, he is gone, and disregards me quite,
Quite disregards me—Oh would pitying heav'n
With lightnings blast me—
Surely to see me pale stretch'd out in death,

Would

Would make him to relent—pity me
And think me innocent.

She faints.

Enter A L S W O L D.

What Matilda, art thou dead!
Heav'n what hard fate hath mark'd thee out
To blast thy early beauties for the grave.
Thou didst foretell my death, and art thou dead!
Miserable mischance!

*He looks on her fix'd in grief and astonishment—She
begins to stir, he takes her by the hand and raises her.*

O I thought thee dead.

M A T I L D A.

What, art thou Alswold!
Fly! fly my Brother fly, O fly this place—
Fly from thy dear country and thy Father,
And seek some distant clime to hide thee in.
Treachery! vile treachery is on foot against thee
To-morrow thou must die! To-morrow Alswold
Soon as sun shall rise—Fly this instant, fly.

A L S W O L D.

What is it frights thy soul! why look'st so on me—
What hast thou seen another airy vision
That so awakes thy fear concerning me?
Treachery! What treachery is on foot against me?
I fear no treachery, nor will I fly.

M A T I L D A.

My Father hath a letter, forg'd it is;
Sign'd with thy name, and seal'd too with thy seal.

It does declare that thou—yes Alswold, thou
 Hast devis'd to kill him; would'st thou think it—
 I can no more—O that some guardian pow'r
 Would from heav'n come down to guard thy person—
 Thou wilt be taken!

A L S W O L D.

Tho' I more do love thee than myself;
 Yet will not I use thy counsel:
 If I must die to-morrow,
 To day I will not fly;
 It shan't be said Prince Alswold fled thro' fear,
 To 'scape from justice that should overtake him—
 No, I will meet pale danger face to face,
 And dare the worst as it becomes a man,
 Who from so foul a crime would free himself;
 But did I know who hath conspir'd against me,
 O might I be by heav'n quite forsaken
 Did not I rush upon him with my sword
 And haste his passage to the shades below. *Exeunt.*

End of the SECOND ACT.

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ACT

A C T III.

Enter HENGIST.

See with what nobleness he comes along
 Giving e'en grace and dignity to chains.
 O on his brow there in appearance sit
 Every virtue that should grace a man—
 Why is there given him this pictur'd greatness
 This seeming likeness of a noble mind
 When all is foul within and dark as hell?

Enter Alswold led in chains.

Your secret villainy is come to light;
 The gods who have an eye to right and wrong
 Will'd not that you should execute your purpose—
 I need not tell you what that purpose is,
 But 'tis so foul, so black, so horrible,
 Nature herself shrinks back and dares not view it;
 Shall I go on—O villain! parricide!

A L S W O L D.

A purpose foul and horrible indeed!
 Had such a thought e'er stirr'd within my breast,
 So much my reason would abhor my nature,
 That ere the deed had shown it to the world,
 I would with my own hands have slain myself.

H E N G I S T.

Your deep hypocrisy will nought avail;
 Too strong hath been our evidence against you.

ALSWOLD,

A L S W O L D.

It is hypocrisy hath won on you
To make you do a deed should want a name,

H E N G I S T.

O I can't endure thee vile dissembler,
Tears of repentance do become thee more
Than this thy haughty language—
The time allotted thee by fate is short
To make thy peace with heav'n for thy misdeeds,
Therefore entreat the gods that they'll have mercy,

A L S W O L D.

I know not how to beg for heav'n's mercy
For an offence of which I've not been guilty :
I would entreat, O would the gods but hear me,
T' uncloke the villain who hath stirr'd against me,
And undeceive my Father. I could weep
To see you made the instrument of villainy,
But for myself I must not shed a tear—
However great the danger that surrounds me;
However quick I'm levell'd with the dust.
I see your looks severe denouncing death
Inexorable; yet will I not be mov'd—
'Tis not in death to hurt a noble mind.

H E N G I S T.

Thy show of virtue will not serve thee now;
Why dost thou smooth thy crime o'er with deceit?
In doing so thou only makes it greater.
With steady hand we've held two equal scales,
In one, plac'd mercy as thou art our Son,

In the other, justice loaded with thy crime;
To death it swiftly verg'd and thou shalt die;
To-morrow shalt thou see thy last of days.

A L S W O L D.

I know the duties that I owe a Father,
If so my Father wills, it must content me;
But is that mercy to condemn the guiltless?
Or is it justice? I care not when I die;
I do not care if this day be my last;
I'm not desirous of a few short hours——
This is the only prayer I make to heav'n:
O may I meet death as becomes a man,
And may my Father ne'er repent his rashness;
When 'tis too late; O may he never feel
The inward horrors of a guilty mind
That conscience and remorse for ever shake.

H E N G I S T.

Away with him!

To the Guards.

A L S W O L D.

I command you stay,
Or by dread heav'n I'll tear me from my chains
And rush upon you with my angry sword——

They stop.

This is the only time I've disobey'd you.

To Hengist.

Can not my Father call to his remembrance,
That fatal day when at his army's head
He sunk oppress'd by an host of foes,
When with a sudden onset they rush'd on;
Say, did I then take any note of danger,

Did

Did not I burst thro' it with my lifted spear,
 That I might save my Father from destruction,
 And slew the man who was in act to kill him?
 Did that speak treason?
 Now lead on.

To the Guards.

Exeunt Alfwold and Guards.

H E N G I S T.

What a curs'd being's man
 Who lives surrounded by a train of fears;
 How more than curs'd is he who wears a crown
 And stands in dread of murder from his Sons.
 But if Sons must against their parents rise,
 Spurn them to earth, and from their aged heads
 Tear off their crowns; let propagation cease;
 The sun in blackest sack-cloth wrap himself;
 Nature herself to chaos turn again,
 And darkness and confusion cover all,

Enter MATILDA and two LADIES.

Hence, nor dare approach me!

M A T I L D A.

O my Father
 Permit me kneel—He's gone—I'll follow him—

Exit Hengist.

My Brother led in chains, I cannot bear it—
 My Brother Alfwold led in chains!
 Why was not my death foretold instead of his?
 Willingly would I have died to save him—
 I will, I will directly to my Father,
 I'll force him hear me, he shall afford him pity,

He

He will, he must, he shall afford him pity—
 He shan't commit a murder on his Son.
 If no persuasion will avail to move him,
 I will drink poison, I will stab myself,
 And with my latest breath I'll beg to save him.

One of the L A D I E S.

Have patience most dear Lady, calm your griefs;
 Oh could we speak sweet comfort to your soul.

Exeunt Matilda and Lady.

The other L A D Y.

Here Ivar comes, I do not like that man—
 Sometimes he stands with his eyes fix'd on earth
 As if revolving on some great design,
 Then sudden casts them on the face of heav'n
 As if he'd backward turn the very fates:
 I think his thoughts can never turn on good,
 O thou fair truth come with thy light from heav'n,
 That we may see where 'tis that falsehood strays
 And heap destruction on the evil doer. *Exit.*

Enter I V A R.

Who would have thought this day
 That rose with such a smile upon his brow
 Would so have frown'd on such a kingly head.
 The people all in crouds rush on together
 To see their mighty Alswold led in chains;
 Wildly confus'd they stare on one another,
 And then on Alswold wond'ring what it means.
 I do applaud myself for this day's work.
 Greatness is greatness whether in height or depth,
 And by great things are great things put in motion.

For

For thus th' unknown pow'r who guides the winds,
 Bids them in tempest fall upon the sea;
 The troubl'd sea upraises to the clouds,
 And in confusion overlooks his shores.
 O fraud, 'tis thou alone must have my praise;
 Tho' fable damn thee to the shades below
 And clothe thee in an ugly wroughten garb;
 Yet when thou throw'st aside thy hell-spun robes
 And wraps thee in the covering of truth
 Fairer than that in which comes forth the morn;
 How amiable, how pure dost thou appear!

Enter O F F A.

Now we drive on and bear a whirlwind with us,
 That throughout all the city looks confusion,
 And humbles those who would aspire above us.

O F F A.

What hast thou done! Ivar, what hast thou done.

I V A R.

What I have done will make prince Offa great,
 Let only time mature it to perfection.

O F F A.

How can I wear a crown that's stain'd with blood
 With Brother's blood! Ah Ivar, he's my Brother!

I V A R.

I never thought to see my Offa thus,
 The bold aspiring Offa is no more!

O F F A.

I have aspired beyond what's meet for Offa,
 And that hath done me wrong, and lost me that

Whereof

Whereof I should be bold—How ill it is
 That one can't look within; where comfort springs
 To ev'ry virtuous, ev'ry noble mind;
 But 'tis not so with me, I can't look there—
 It is not well—my mind hath took offence—
 I do despise myself—I did consent!

I V A R.

After this sort you must not shape your thoughts.

O F F A.

Before this deed was done I did see otherwise.
 My mind did falsely represent a King
 Doing me injury, contempt and wrong;
 But now I see prince Alswold and my Brother,
 And most unworthily he's led in chains!

I V A R.

You then did see him as you ought to see him,
 Now thro' affections eye you see him falsely.
 This is a weakness Offa, shake it off;
 Whatever gives you pain away with it;
 For only your own thoughts can do you harm.
 Come, you must make agreement with yourself,
 Not to be mov'd whatever chance to come;
 For he whose daring mind would be the greatest
 Must take off those whom fortune hath made so.

O F F A.

Something in dread silence whispers me;
 It is not well—Offa, it is not well
 To be privy to a plot against my Brother;
 To see him led in chains struck me with horror—

I wish

I wish I'd died before I'd seen this day—
I cannot forget he is my Brother.

I V A R.

What is it in dread silence whispers you!—
Sure nothing in dread silence whispers you,
But your own thoughts that madly work within;
And make you do an injury to yourself;
Which Offa you should rule and not they you.
Was it not necessity that set me on
To act as I have done, that you might not
Stoop down in reverence at your Brother's throne?

O F F A.

Stoop down in reverence! that I never will:
But what necessity should set me on
By a curs'd plot with treachery to kill him;
'Tis against the laws both human and divine:
The deed is both accurs'd by gods and men.

I V A R.

Do not dear Prince depress your spirits thus;
Why you were not concerned in the plot,
Therefore no curse of gods can fall on you:
Let Offa wear the crown in safety wear it,
And let the curse light on me which you dread.

O F F A.

Oh should I wear the crown the gods would blast me;
With their keenest lightnings would they blast me,
They could not bear to look on't.

I V A R.

A T R A G E D Y.

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I V A R.

What think you
The gods will look upon us out of heav'n?
Believe it not, concern'd are they sufficiently
In their own ease and in their own affairs
To disregard mankind and e'en the world.

O F F A.

Yes Alswold yes, I would be equal to thee;
For rather than be less I'd cease to be:
But by foul treachery to take him off,
To such a plot I never would consent.

I V A R.

Go hence then, and disclose it to your Father;
By heav'n you will not then escape his justice,
And you'll away to death as well as Ivar;
Or if you live, you'll live the scorn of Alswold.

O F F A.

Scorn'd by Alswold! were he not my Brother,
I'd brave the trial of his skill in arms—
Set up the crown the cause of the contest,
And bid him boldly stand upon his guard;
But should I chance to fall in the encounter,
Strait all resentment I would cast aside,
And gently take him by the hand and say,
Alswold the crown is thine—
Think not with treachery I'll take him off:
I never would, if he were not my Brother.

Exit Offa.

D

I V A R.

I V A R.

Offa, in thee I have been much deceiv'd—

Why did I make him privy to the plot?

Curse on thy folly Ivar, curse thy folly;

Thou now hast lain a snare to catch thyself

Instead of Alfwold——Ivar, where'll this end?

I see where thy concerted scheme will end;

But I must strait endeavour to prevent it.

Since time that's past can ne'er return again,

Let me now use the present to advantage.

Yes Alfwold yet, I'll shake thy mighty soul;

Thou shalt not see me dragg'd to execution,

No, if the who'e lay open to thy view

Clear as the light of day——

Thou should'st not see me dragg'd to execution;

No, by yon heav'n thou should'st not see it;

With sword in hand I'd meet thee face to face,

And if I fell, I'd fall as Ivar should,

With ruin and confusion heaped around me.

Exit.

End of the THIRD ACT.

ACT

A C T IV.

Enter IVAR and an OFFICER.

I V A R.

Well Captain, you've been active in th' affair
Wherein I made request.

O F F I C E R.

My Lord I have;
Your magnanimity and gen'rous spirit
I have so pleaded to my fellow officers,
And they to ev'ry soldier one by one,
That now in dreadful secrecy we wait
But only your dread signal to proceed
To sink at once the city into ruins.

I V A R.

That's well—'tis good to guard against the worst;
Once more I shall assay the youthful Prince,
To force the milkiness of nature from him;
But if immutably he still be fix'd
In his resolves, you shall hear farther from me.

Exit Officer.

Now does the clouded day clear up again,
And smiles on Ivar, 'gainst the worst I'm arm'd;
For with a golden promise I have drawn
The forces of the King from their allegiance—
Say what's in thee thou dull and heavy earth
That men to be possess'd of thy good graces
Wade deep thro' murder, sacrilege, and treason.

D 2

Enter

Enter O F F A.

O Offa, worse and worse your minds depress'd;
Your very looks blast all the man in me;
How good a kingdom waits upon my Prince!
How fair a crown to smile around his brow!
Would he but be himself, and dare to reach it.

O F F A.

Let Ivar be accurs'd; the crown accurs'd;
And myself too accurs'd; who've seen this day;
Who have consented to thy dark contrivance.

I V A R.

Yes, let the curse light on thee—I'll dissemble.

Aside,

I pray you listen what I have to say,
Before I undertook this dread affair,
I did foresee what tempest it might bring;
How heavy it would bear against my life;
How far more full of danger it would be
Than e'en to meet a Lion in the desert
Or an outrageous Tyger wanting food:
Yet was my soul not to be made afraid,
But with unmoved firmness, bad go on;
So much the love of Offa did prevail.
But you have given me curses for my love,
And turn'd my good t'wards you into abuse.
Ah Offa, Offa, is not this unkindness!

O F F A.

Go ask my Sister drove to desperation?
Just now in madness did she ask her Father

That

That he would free her Brother from his chains:
 When he with some severity refus'd it,
 Strait did she snatch a dagger she'd conceal'd,
 And would have buried it within her bosom,
 Had I not that instant caught it from her—
 Curse on your arts they have undone my Sister,

I V A R.

Young Prince, be calm, she will do well again;
 A troubl'd stream in time doth grow compos'd.

O F F A.

My Father too just now with tears embrac'd me—
 Told me for Alswold he had found amends,
 Because I never would conspire against him—
 Curse on me, no; I've not conspir'd against him—
 But have I not conspir'd against a Brother
 Much greater and much better than myself!

I V A R.

Could we have gain'd by means more sociable
 The way to lift Prince Offa up to glory,
 We should have us'd them; as it could not be,
 We've therefore made necessity our guide,
 And if we've been severe 'twas not our choice,
 Necessity my Prince should plead with you,
 And keep you from these self tormenting thoughts;
 Whatever by necessity is done;
 However black the deed, it always hath
 Pardon from gods above, and men below,
 Hence let me tell you Prince these thoughts disgrace you,
 For he whom dire necessity leads on
 Should cut his way thro' ev'ry opposition,

D 3

And

And midst contending passions stand unshaken
 Firm as a mighty and deep-rooted alp
 That while the tempest buffets round its sides
 Looks with a stern and haughty air above it.
 But wherefore do I speak? I might as soon
 Force the rude winds keep peace, and listen to me,
 As draw the ear of Offa to attention!

O F F A.

Think not thou can'st again inflame my passions
 To make my soul take deeper offence?
 No further can thy words have force with me;
 For conscience makes a stand 'twixt me and them;
 And thus am I advised from within.
 There's no necessity to heap up evil,
 Nor should necessity break thro' the ties
 That make man, man. No, Ivar no, that's base,
 That's base, beneath the dignity of Offa;
 Offa will not by nature be forsaken—
 Not by humanity. For he whose breast
 Hath no recess where soft compassion dwells,
 Is but a Tyger in the form of man.

I V A R.

Think not I bear a breast so edg'd with steel,
 That no compassion ever enters there;
 The love I bear you Offa speaks me otherwise,
 And the great act that is on foot to serve you—
 But to hold pity further than there's need,
 Confesseth weakness and a woman's heart;
 I'd have you noble—well as pitiful,
 And bear controulment like the lordly lion
 In what concerns your honour. Allwold's death

Fast

Fast binds you to the height of highest fortune;
 I don't forbid your tears if you did love him;
 But hold the sword, if not it will turn back
 Against yourself, and prove a traitor to you.
 Ah Offa, Offa what men have been here
 Since the great globe could measure its duration,
 Of such was the great Cæsar, he'd have given
 If 'twere an hundred Brother's up to death
 Who would have dar'd to look beyond himself,
 And stay'd his passage in his way to glory;
 For when rous'd up to action he did seem
 E'en to controul the very elements,
 And hang the tempests on his lifted sword,
 And like a rapid whirlwind sweep along,
 Or lightnings when they take the forest oaks,
 And give them up to ruin. You shall find,
 If to each prick of conscience he had yielded,
 The force of action would have turn'd aside,
 And left undone the wonders of the world.

O F F A.

Your words do pass beside me like the wind;
 They touch my ear, but come not near my soul,
 That from this resolution can't be shaken:
 Ere this day end Prince Alfwold shall be free.

I V A R.

If this be Offa's will let it stand fix'd;
 For hence persuasion no more shall I use—
 If your own danger have no weight with you,
 You go strait on to ruin and to death
 Which with strong hand I would have kept you from.

O F F A.

To die is my resolve, my firm intent;
 Think not that I will live beneath the wound
 Of biting obloquy and keen reproach.

"Offa conspir'd against his elder Brother,"
 No, here's my final remedy for that.

Laying his hand on his sword,

But I'll endeavour to procure thy pardon;
 Alfwold is gen'rous, he will not deny
 This one request unto a dying Brother.

I V A R.

I wear not supple knees—regard not me;
 With this alone I must entreat a pardon.

Laying his hand on his sword,

Offa, farewell! I leave you to yourself.
 I would have plac'd a crown upon your head,
 Had you but greatness to support its weight.
 Offa, farewell! do just as you think fit:

* Since you have cast my favours from yourself,
 Myself I must regard——

O F F A.

Betake thee hence,
 If not I'll fall upon thee with my sword.

I V A R.

I equally despise thy sword and thee—
 Fall thou on thy own sword——farewel.

Exit Ivar,

Enter

A T R A G E D Y.

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Enter a LADY, an Attendant of MATILDA,

O F F A.

How fares Matilda?

L A D Y,

O my dearest Lord,

I fear her peace of mind's for ever hurt;
Oft will she say, "yes Offa too was cruel,
" My Brother Offa too was cruel to me;
" He kept me from the way that led to death—
" There should I be at peace—there be at rest;
" From death my Brother's blood could never wakeme."
Then tears succeed—and then she sudden starts,
And with an air distracted looks around,
And oft exclaims—" I will go down to death—
" I will not live to see my Brother murder'd!"

O F F A.

Go hence, and bear my comfort to her soul;
Say Offa greets her with the name of peace—
Tell her Prince Alswold shall be free to day,
If not I'll die myself to set him free.

L A D Y.

I go my Lord, but I am much afraid,
Her gentle spirits so distract and torn
Will never more assume their wonted peace—
I fear not Alswold's self can give her peace.

Exit Lady.

OFFA,

O F F A.

O you, O thunders hear me where you lodge;
 O hear me! give me pity! give me pity
 And force your lightnings find admittance here—
 Do I deserve your pity? no, I do not;
 I had one only Sister, she I've ruin'd—
 Her senses are grown wild! and I the cause—
 For I did give my ear to that bad man;
 Yes, I did give him leave to act at will.
 Why did I feed my soul with curs'd ambition
 Beneath the borrow'd picture of all greatness;
 If no superior I could bear to have,
 Why did I not go instant down to death,
 (And give nought else to ruin but myself)
 My Brother's sceptre could not reach me there.

Enter H A N D E L.

H A N D E L.

My sov'reign wills
 To have some private conf'rence with Prince Offa,

O F F A.

Alas! so dire confusion reigns within me;
 For there all harmony, all beauty's fled!
 That I can't ease a breast that is diseas'd,

H A N D E L.

The breast that feels a wound
 Seeks from a wounded breast a cure,
 What shall I give in answer to your Father,
 That you'll attend him? Why is Offa silent?

'Tis

'Tis true you've cause to mourn a Brother's fall;
 For this humanity and nature bid you;
 But then the cause that marks him out for death
 Requires that you should moderate your grief—

Exit Offa.

His actions and his words are not like these
 Arising from a soul oppress'd with grief;
 But rather from remorse and secret guilt
 They seem to spring. Alswold the stain on thee
 I fear me much belongs not to thy nature;
 Thy air and dignity disgrac'd with chains
 Confess'd a mind that soars above deceit.
 Here Hengist comes, but I must not divulge
 My secret thoughts—Ah! what can mean this noise?

A tumult heard at a distance.

Enter HENGIST.

Tumult and confusion my dread Lord
 Seem to increase; I fear the multitude
 Seeing th' unhappy Prince with chains cast on him;
 Commiseration hath inspir'd their souls
 To act what misbecomes them.

HENGIST.

Vain thy fears;
 For a strong guard of troops I have commanded
 To keep him in the dungeon safe shut up,
 Lest he before the hour of death arrive
 Make his escape from out the hand of justice.
 But have you seen Prince Offa; where is he?

HANDEL.

Yes, my dread liege, I told him your request,

To

To which he scarce would give an answer to me;
 But woe-struck, stood like pictur'd melancholy,
 Wrapp'd in grief—then suddenly withdrew.
 Dreadful is the charge against Prince Alfwold;
 But Offa's grief speaks loudly for a pardon.

H E N G I S T.

Had I an hundred Sons all kneeling round;
 All begging to set free their Brother Alfwold;
 They all should beg—they all should kneel in vain:
 Whoever lifts his hand against a Father;
 Without e'en pity or remorse should die,
 And heav'n's in smiles to see his execution.

Enter a Messenger,

M E S S E N G E R.

My liege, Prince Alfwold's loosed from his chains;
 The angry multitude rush on together
 Outrageous as the deep warr'd on by winds,
 And swear to be reveng'd for Alfwold's wrongs;
 That Alfwold's self can scarce restrain their fury.

H E N G I S T.

Heav'n's why is this so?—Villain thou liest!
 Thou should'st have said that Alfwold leads them on;
 Why have not my troops then stay'd their fury?

M E S S E N G E R.

Not one my Lord will lift his sword 'gainst Alfwold;
 With tears they all exclaim, they'd rather draw
 Each one his sword, and sudden fall upon it,
 Than be accessory to Alfwold's death.

HENGIST.

A T R A G E D Y.

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H E N G I S T.

And thou hast too espous'd the part of Alfwold,
And comes thou here to aggravate my griefs!
Betake thee hence! thy fight is hateful to me.

Exit Messenger.

Which way lies my peace—O memory
Do not this instant drive my soul to madness—
Did I regard him in his infancy
With so much care and tenderness for this?
O pain to think, O misery severe!
I should have given him to the pow'rs of death,
Soon as the light of day declar'd him born.
O thou Elfrida rise, arise from death
And see the acts of thy beloved Son,
And lead a wretched consort to thy tomb;
For where's a place of safety now for me!
I have no soldiers who will guard me now,
And an incens'd multitude is coming on,
And Alfwold's at their head with men in arms;
Come on, thou barbarous and unnatural Son,
And with my blood stain thy accursed hands.

H A N D E L.

Think not my Lord that he will use his pow'r
Against the life of him who is Father;
The ties of nature sure will stir within him,
And make him kneel in tears and penitence.

H E N G I S T.

Can the Leopard change his spots?—Away!
No, nor can the Tyger change his nature.

Exit Handel.

O strait

O strait my bow and quiver I will take ;
 And you O gods do you direct it right
 To find an entrance to the heart of him,
 Who was but is no longer now my Son ;
 Oh murderer ! Oh parricide ! Oh villain !

End of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT

A C T V.

Enter H E N G I S T.

Yes, there are gods who delight in justice;
For they have lodg'd my arrow in his heart—
And he is hast'ning to the shades below
For a meet recompence.

Enter H A N D E L.

H A N D E L.

My liege, I'm come
With melancholy tidings.

H E N G I S T.

Speak what tidings?

H A N D E L.

O had I eloquence o'er my tale of woe
To cast a veil to soften its distress;
Left it should sink too deep into your breast!

H E N G I S T.

I tell thee what, if thou had'st eloquence
To make grief smile, or dress a vicious deed
In robes of innocence,
Thou could'st not change the property of vice;
Nor take from grief what in itself it is;
Stript of their fringe and borrow'd ornaments
Things must be as they are, therefore pursue
Thy melancholy tale without a preface.

H A N D E L.

H A N D E L.

Where most confusion seem'd to wound the air,
 I did betake myself, and there I saw
 Your Son Prince Alswold loosed from his chains;
 And at small distance from him stood unhappy!
 Ah ill-starr'd Offa! Ah ill-fated youth!
 Memory o'er thy tomb shall drop a tear.

H E N G I S T.

What's Offa dead!

H A N D E L.

He is dead my Lord.

H E N G I S T.

It fills my mind with dreadful apprehensions;
 Quick on thy life I charge thee to disclose
 What 'tis thou know'st relating to his death.

H A N D E L.

While your Son Alswold and the unhappy Prince,
 Endeavour'd to assuage the people's fury,
 That like a rapid torrent rush'd along
 To lay your palace in a heap of ruin,
 Full swift an arrow lodg'd in Offa's breast.
 But what accursed hand did bend the bow,
 Ignorance secludes from every search.

H E N G I S T.

And is he dead, and did'st thou see him die?

H A N D E L.

With grief my Lord I must say that I did.

HENGIST.

A TRAGEDY.

49

HENGIST *aside.*

Then Offa he is slain for Alfwold's wrongs—
And I am curs'd indeed most curs'd of men.
'Tis I have slain my Offa, yes, 'tis I—
These curs'd hands have don't!

HANDEL.

O wretched King. *Aside.*

HENGIST.

And now you heav'ns can you inflict on me
A punishment that's equal to my crime!
O what I feel within me is sufficient;
Spare, spare your vengeance from me, 'tis enough,
And more than I can bear—
O would the earth this instant cleave afunder,
That I might sink down sudden to the shades.

HANDEL.

Hear me my Lord? Why do you turn away?
Hear me, disclose a scene of treachery,
Base treachery and deceit against Prince Alfwold?
O Ivar, most accurs'd, what hated fiend
Stirr'd up thy soul to such an horrid deed,
To murder your brave Son the valiant Alfwold?
And what's more black make you—

HENGIST.

A murderer!

I am a murderer! talk not to me!—
Talk not to me of treachery and treason;
Can I with patience hear of crimes like these?
Can I put on the robes of innocence
To be a judge or even an accuser

E

When

When heavier sins do fall to my account?
 Alfwold is to Ivar not a Son,
 But what am I to Offa, sure a Father,
 And with these hands I have slain him!
 Comfort no more must soothe this breast of mine;
 My guilty conscience like the troubl'd sea
 Must sleep no more, for no way lies my peace;
 O Offa! Offa! O my Son, my Son! *Exit Hengist.*

H A N D E L.

What fury, guilt, and deep remorse are thine;
 I would not for thy conscience wear thy crown;
 O thou who rul'st the heavens in pity guard us!

Enter a L A D Y.

Thy looks speak haste, I pray thee say what news?

L A D Y.

I've business with the King, pass'd he this way?

H A N D E L.

He did, but yet thy labour is in vain;
 Address the wild winds or the raging sea
 As soon as they the King shall hear thee speak.
 How is the Princess, say how is Matilda?

L A D Y.

Her state of mind's beyond my pow'r to speak;
 At ev'ry tumult that does ride the wind
 She starting cries, "Ah, there my Brother's slain!"

H A N D E L.

Alas Matilda thou hast cause to grieve;
 A scene of more distress I never saw
 Than that which just now visited my eyes.

L A D Y.

A T R A G E D Y.

51

L A D Y.

Oh I am all impatience, say what scene!

H A N D E L.

"Twas very sorrowful—a mournful sight—
 Alswold supporting up his dying Brother,
 Who was that instant by an arrow struck,
 And only said, tears bursting from his eyes,
 " Forgive me Alswold, I've conspir'd against thee,
 " I know thy gen'rous nature will forgive me;
 " Had not heav'ns vengeance struck at my offence
 " I should have rais'd my hand against myself—
 " Look thou to the peace of poor Matilda—
 " Ah, Ivar is to blame"—He would say more
 But death for ever clos'd his lips in silence.
 Thrice Alswold view'd his Brother pale in death,
 And thrice he wept—the gen'rous, vulgar, strait
 Forgot to rage and hung their heads in grief,
 While melancholy murmurs ran thro' all.
 Not long remain'd this scene of sad distress;
 For Ivar at some distance strait was seen
 Seeking to pry into the state of things,
 Having some dozen following his steps
 With bow and quiver arm'd to guard his person.
 Then Alswold turn'd his grief to dreadful ire
 And thus exclaim'd: " See here the curs'd effects
 " Of thy dark-working hand, my Brother slain!—
 " Thou too must follow him!" He said no more
 But stood all dreadful with his unsheath'd sword,
 The great avenger of his Brother's death:
 Shouts of applause succeed; ev'n with less noise
 The winds blow hurricane and tear the woods
 Or seas in tempests rage against their shores.

E 2

L A D Y.

L A D Y.

Alas! what did succeed! is Alfwold too,
Gone down to death to accompany his Brother?
If so O house of Hengist thou art fall'n!

H A N D E L.

Soon as the clamor Ivar would permit,
Strait with an air serene he drew his sword
And thus address'd the Prince. " I never will'd
" To have thy Brother there lie stretch'd in death;
" But Alfwold should have been what Offa is,
" Had Ivar's will but only scope to act;
" I call not heav'n or gods to witness this,
" But this my sword never to be sheath'd again
" 'Till thou or I be stretch'd in dust as low
" As Offa lies." So saying he retir'd,
Fixing his thoughts on the dark work of death.

L A D Y.

O may just heav'n preserve the gen'rous Prince
Against the machinations of that villain.

H A N D E L.

There is no doubt but victory will be Alfwold's;
For vice however crafty and discerning
Can never stand the shock of so much valour—
So much virtue—hark! the trumpet sounds;
Noise and confusion gather fast upon us;
No longer now is this a place of safety.

L A D Y.

O ye dread heav'ns where! where! can we be safe!

Exit Lady.

HANDEL.

A TRAGEDY.

53

H A N D E L.

Here comes the King, I will withdraw a little.

Retires.

Enter H E N G I S T.

H E N G I S T.

I must see Matilda too no more!

She must not come near me! no, she must not;

My very looks—my hands deep stain'd in blood—

Her Brother's blood will turn her into stone.

O could I weep to give my mind some ease—

I cannot weep, where'er I turn my eye

Methinks I see his melancholy shade

Quick glancing by, his clothes deep dy'd in blood,

And keeps me from my tears—

O ye blank horrors look not so upon me;

Do you not look so on my trembling soul—

Where can I fly from you, where find me ease?

I cannot dare to look towards the heav'ns,

There is no pity left, no none for me;

They cry aloud that I have slain my Son.

Handel comes forward.

H A N D E L.

Wound not with sharp reflections thus your peace,

The greatest human prudence nought avails,

Against the will of fate and ruling gods.

H E N G I S T.

Shall I accuse the gods with my misdeeds?

By such an act can I acquit myself

Fly from my conscience and the laws hereafter—

It is my own rashness hath undone me.
 My swift credulity to trust in lies;
 My swift credulity to trust a villain
 Hath plung'd me in vice and blacken'd me with murder,
 The foulest murder, murder of my Son!

H A N D E L.

O could I soothe your passions into rest,
 I pray you to take comfort.

H E N G I S T.

Comfort me!
 No, Handel no, thou could'st not comfort me
 Tho' more than human were thy pow'rs to charm;
 Tho' thou could'st win upon the ear of night
 And keep her list'ning in her silent sphere,
 Appease the winds or hush the troubl'd sea:
 Comfort must be far hence; my peace is fled.

Exit Hengist,

H A N D E L.

How bless'd is he who hath his peace of mind;
 How very wretched is a King without it—
 Ah Alswold comes—I'll not disclose to him
 What sad mischance hath fall'n upon his Father,
 I will not be the bearer of such tidings!

Enter A L S W O L D.

A L S W O L D.

Did not my Father Handel pass this way?

H A N D E L.

My Lord he did.

ALSWOLD,

A T R A G E D Y. 55

A L S W O L D.

As if destruction follow'd so he flies me;
Does he not know that now I'm innocent?
Does he think still I have conceal'd a dagger
That I may bury it within his bosom?
O thou credulous and ungenerous Sire,
Thee thy credulity hath lost a Son!
And me a Brother!

The Trumpet sounds.

H A N D E L.

Let us hence my Lord,
Noise and confusion hurry on this way.

A L S W O L D.

Come on vain man and haste to thy destruction;
For heaven's vengeance not far off depends
To light with ruin on the cursed Ivar.
I hence withdraw myself to join my troops,
To turn destruction back upon thyself.

Exeunt.

Enter IVAR and SOLDIERS, meeting a MESSENGER.

M E S S E N G E R.

Thus saith the seer who looks into the fates,
(By whose permission hither am I come)
The heav'ns are troubled and the gods are angry,
And instant ruin threatens upon Ivar.
And this withal he gives you in advice;
Let each one to his station strait retire,
And by his penitence atone his crime—

E 4

Vanish

Vanish like mist before the rising day,
For what so terrible as gods incens'd!

I V A R.

Stay, take thy reward with thee—bear my message—
This shalt thou give in answer to the seer;
Unless this day shall put his words to proof,
Before another sun shall light the world;
Thus shall my sword do execution on him,
And turn the angry gods against himself.

Stabs the Messenger,

M E S S E N G E R.

I am made sick to death!—O you great gods! *Exit,*

I V A R *to his followers.*

Who's he that thus can look into the heav'ns
And say what is to come from their complexion—
The heav'ns are often troubl'd like the sea;
Nor think prophetic omens hang on them;
It is by discord they are kept in tune;
And by their action do they stand secure,
And free themselves from sickness and decay;
Which did they not—all order gone to wreck,
All harmony and beauty fled away,
Each foul contagion would o'erlook the earth,
And vanish all at once the race of man.
Nor could the heav'ns endure corruption long;
Soon would their august pillars 'gin to stoop,
And with their deep foundations slide away
And dreadful sink the ruin of the world.
But yet these men to augury accurs'd
Who catch fore-knowledge from the passing winds

And

And find out fate by reading of the stars;
Oft have I seen them turn the chance of war,
And snatch the raven from the victor-side,
When with mad fury they've disclos'd the fates;
For strait the minds of all conceiving fear,
They take at once the coward to the heart,
And cry "'tis vain to go against the heav'ns,"
And lose the victory the gods never will'd.
Then let not augury oppress your minds,
Nor place your confidence in fools like these,
Who dark to their own fate would teach us ours—
'Tis true th' affair in hand is hedg'd with danger,
And doubtless I ere its accomplishment
May measure out my length upon the earth—
But here's my brave companion—this good sword
Shall give me aid to force destruction back
On the destroyers, and show them death's true form;
And you my gen'rous citizens and friends,
Since you've espous'd my part and follow me,
See that you act now worthy of your leader;
If in our hands we bear the victory
Dignity and honour wait upon us.
But if its doom'd by fate that we must die,
Let desperation be our dire attendant,
To lay disclosed such a bloody scene,
That may affright the very lookers on,
And make the victors weep—

Enter a MESSENGER.

MESSENGER.

Alfwold my Lord

Hath join'd his troops and dreadfully comes on.

I V A R.

I V A R.

So let him come, for by these swords we swear,
That now stand drawn for deadly execution,
That we will strait as dreadfully receive him.

Exeunt.

Enter ALSWOLD, OFFICERS, &c.

A L S W O L D.

Now bloody-handed war at freedom walks
With his drawn sword o'er the fearful city,
To dye the streets with blood of innocence,
I need not tell you who's the cause of this;
Nor do I ask of each to do his part;
I know your gen'rous souls will fight for Alswold;
Nor will you unrevengeed see me fall.

One of the OFFICERS.

Alswold lead on, the victory is thine;
Treason shall sink from its aspiring height;
Nor unrevengeed will we see thee fall.

Enter a MESSENGER.

M E S S E N G E R.

Alswold hear;

Hear me before the shock of arms begin;
Before th' unhappy city sink in ruins;
Before thyself too sink to ruin with it,
(For thus it may be, who can search out fate)
What dreadful tidings 'tis to thee I bring.

A L S W O L D.

What dreadful tidings is't thou would'st disclose?

Death

Death hath already took from me a Brother;
What other evil hath struck at my peace!

M E S S E N G E R.

Thy Father Alfwold call'd me to his presence;
Wild was his look, all-haggard was his eye,
And in his right hand held a naked sword.
Trembling I heard him speak these words to me,
"Thou see'st me here a most unhappy man
"Made thus unhappy by my own rash deed;
"Hear what I speak and bear it strait to Alfwold,
"Tell him he's in possession of a crown,
"And tell him too I know he's innocent;
"But what am I, a most foul murderer!
"For so my curs'd credulity hath made me;
"I aim'd a deadly arrow at himself,
"And slew his Brother, for I thought him he
"Where I did stand upon my palace-top.
"He'll not let foul deceit escape unpunish'd,
"Me he'll revenge, his Brother and himself
"On Ivar"—Thus he spoke and spoke no more,
But fell upon his sword and strait expir'd.
I would proceed but know not how to do it,
So wofully the scene affects my mind;
For strait Matilda came into the room—
Oh mournful sight her Father drench'd in blood;
His right hand holding still the deadly sword,
Sudden she started back and mournful stood.
Like to a fair and stately poplar,
Its beauties wither'd by the wrath of heav'n;
Then fell—to rise no more.

Exit Alfwold.

O thou

O thou who bend'st beneath thy feet the heav'n's!
 Can'st thou speak comfort to a soul like mine;
 My Father dead! my Brother dead! and Sister too
 All dead!——

And he is still alive who caus'd their fall;
 By heav'n he is and meets me now in arms.
 O thou deep sorrow dispossess thy seat,
 Let rage and fell revenge supply thy place,
 That like consuming fire I may fall on him
 Or heav'n dealing thunder—

O F F I C E R S.

Lead thou on,
 We'll follow thee to death for thy revenge.

*Exeunt,**Enter IVAR and some OFFICERS.*

I V A R.

The dying and the dead choke up my way;
 Each one stands with his hated fellow clos'd
 To strike and die at once, O glorious fight
 Dear to my eyes; thou Alswold close with me
 And death and ruin come between our swords,
 For 'tis with you that we must shortly deal.

*Exeunt,**Enter ALSWOLD, and IVAR meeting.*

A L S W O L D.

How dares thou look upon thy injur'd Prince?
 Before I sink thee down to endless night
 I would relate how thou hast injur'd me;
 Most foully injur'd me: but this my sword

Where

Where deadly vengeance sitteth on its point,
Ordain'd the scourge of thee by righteous heav'n
Cries out aloud to spare thee not a moment.

I V A R.

First speak thy wrongs;
Then quick and sharp as lightning fall thou on,
So shalt thou nobly regain lost time
And I will brave thy daring, **thunder-proof.**

A L S W O L D.

Then know;
'Tis thou hast rais'd our Sire against ourself;
Thou too hast made him slay a much-lov'd Son
Thro' which in madness he hath slain himself;
'Tis thro' thy means Matilda is no more—
Did that alone but rise in enmity,
For that alone I'd hold thee in pursuit
Wheree'er the sun gives light unto the world—
Hark! the dread concourse now of men in arms;
'Tis thou hast set them on in civil war
To stain their hands in one another's blood—
Shalt thou escape the vengeance that's thy due?
Shalt thou in smiles look o'er our ruin'd house?
No, Alfwold's still alive, and hence to hell,
For earth no longer is a place for thee.

I V A R.

But this determines that, now come thou on,
And say if Ivar be a match for thee.

They fight, Ivar falls.

I V A R.

I V A R.

O fun with all thy glory fade away,
 And night with pitchy darkness fill thy place;
 Let ev'ry wind bear thick the sounds of death
 Till all the human race do fill a grave,
 And at their death their fate as black as mine—
 O Offa, 'tis for this that I have striv'd
 To fix a crown upon thy cursed head,
 It is by thy misconduct I am thus;
 Thro' the thick gloom of hell I'll follow thee
 And seek revenge—

Dies.

F I N I S.

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